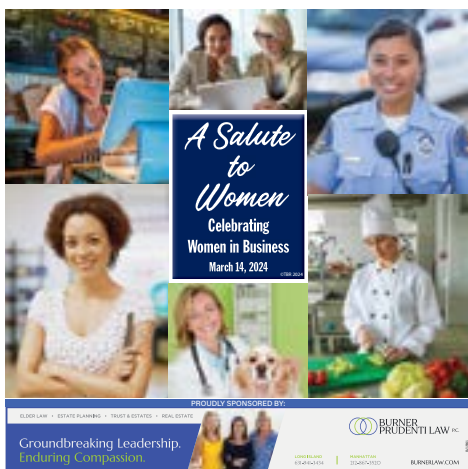




Civic meeting calls for action
Port Jefferson residents clash over future of school district

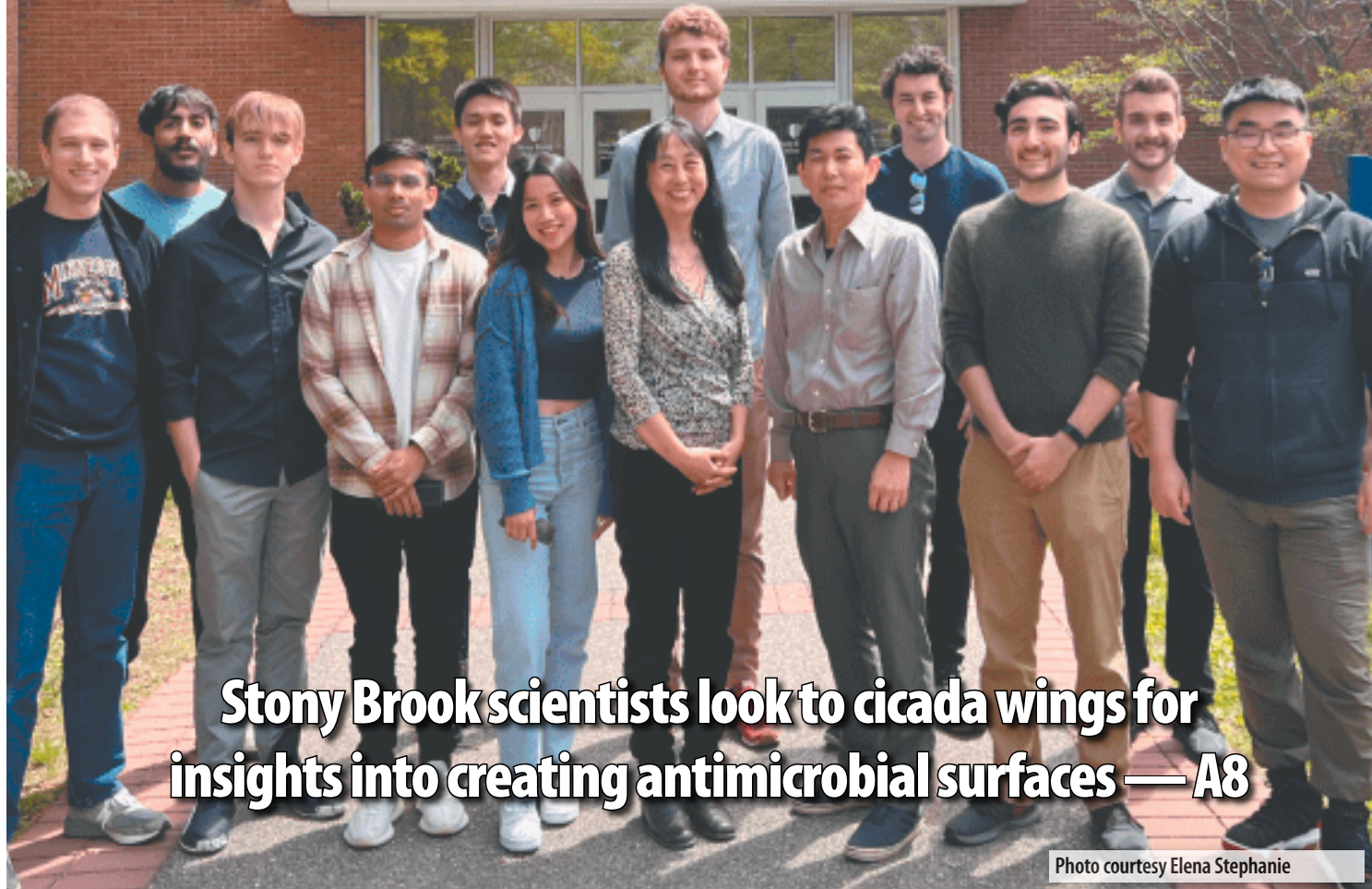
A3



Inside

SPACE RESERVED FOR SUBSCRIBER ADDRESS

SBU duo awarded \$1.2M for pathogen prevention



Stony Brook scientists look to cicada wings for insights into creating antimicrobial surfaces — A8

Photo courtesy Elena Stephanie

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Remembering Michael H. Burner

PREPARED BY THE BURNER FAMILY
DESK@TBRNEWSMEDIA.COM

Michael Burner, 80, of Westhampton Beach, passed away on March 6.

Michael was born on Sept. 15, 1943, to Kurt and Anna Burner in the Bronx. At 16 years old, his first job was in a button factory also in the Bronx. He was a rising star in the retail world and as only Michael could do, he went into an entirely new field: construction. Later in life he became a builder/developer, as the founder and president of Elderco Inc., a creator of fine homes in the Hamptons.

In 1980 with three kids in tow, Brian, Robin and Gabriele, he married Nancy J. Marchesini who already had daughter Tara. Soon Britt, Kyra and Taylor made it an uneven seven.

To say Michael was a family man is an understatement.

From starting the Safe Homes Program and Friday Night Recreation to coaching sports teams and serving as president

community service, Michael was a leader and active member of the Port Jefferson Lions Club and, later, the Moriches Bay Project, Kiwanis of Greater Westhampton and was a charter member of the Westhampton Yacht Squadron.

Michael will be missed by his friends, family, clients, business associates, the Elderco team and all of the other various lives he touched with his sarcasm and quick wit.

Michael is survived by his wife Nancy; son Brian; daughters Robin, Gabriele, Tara, Britt, Kyra and Taylor; 18 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, please make donations to The Michael H. Burner Community Service Trust at everloved.com/life-of/michael-burner. All donations will be used to support various community groups and projects in which Michael was involved.



of the Port Jefferson School Board of Education, Michael was an impactful part of the local community. Ever dedicated to



Honoring Our Beloved Pets: Memorial Tribute Page

Celebrate the memories of your furry, finned, feathered and scaly companions who have crossed the Rainbow Bridge.

TBR News Media invites you to contribute to our Pet Memorial page, a tribute to the pets who have left paw prints on our hearts.

Your tributes will appear on a dedicated page published quarterly, creating a space to remember and celebrate the lives of our beloved pets.

How to Participate:

Share a snapshot that captures the essence of your cherished pet.

Craft a brief memorial message up to 50 words, expressing the love and joy your pet brought into your life. Feel free to share a funny anecdote or a special moment. Include your pet's year born or adopted and year passed.

Email your submissions to petmemorials@tbrnewsmedia.com

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Residents debate future of Port Jefferson School District at civic meeting

BY SAMANTHA RUTT
EDITOR1@TBRNEWSMEDIA.COM

A recent Port Jefferson Civic Association meeting held at the Port Jefferson Library saw a significant turnout of residents, both familiar faces and newcomers, gathering to discuss the future of the Port Jefferson School District. The March 11 meeting, which drew a diverse crowd, sparked a heated debate regarding the declining enrollment within the district and how best to address this pressing issue.

On one side of the debate were residents, led by a presentation from Gail Sternberg, advocating for drastic measures such as closing the school district altogether or offering tuition options for students to attend neighboring districts. During her presentation, Sternberg cited documents she allegedly received from a Freedom of Information Act application from the school district regarding its projected enrollment numbers.

Conversely, another group of residents passionately argued for investing in the school district in hopes of revitalizing it and attracting more families to the area. They proposed initiatives aimed at enhancing the district's offerings, improving facilities and implementing strategies to promote the district to potential residents.

"By not investing money in the schools, we are making a self-fulfilling prophecy for people not to want to come here," a concerned Port Jefferson parent of two said. "My son has three new students in his grade in the past two or three weeks. My daughter who is in kindergarten, also has had new students in the classroom. So, if we do not invest in the school, people are not going to want to come here."

In addition to raising questions about dwindling enrollment, the outstanding sexual abuse cases against the school district were briefly mentioned but the extent of the potential liability is still unknown.

Questions persistently arose with regard to budgetary concerns. Residents argued that cutting losses and consolidating resources would be the most financially responsible course of action, whereas others advocated for investing in the enhancements for the struggling district.

Sternberg urged for a public forum to address the financial expenditures from the district, making note of the areas unaffordability and conversations that have allegedly begun to address a consolidation plan.

"If our school taxes are so high that young families can't afford to live in Port Jefferson, we'll just be shooting ourselves in the foot,"

Sternberg said. "The declining enrollment situation has already created public discussions with the Three Village and Mount Sinai school districts and their respective constituents. We need to have the same public forum to openly discuss our challenges and options. And we must be proactive."

The civic association's high school liaison, Drew Sora, suggested investment is the key to a more prosperous future.

"Improving our schools is the key to drawing new students," Sora said. "You can read the comments on Facebook, or listen at the school board meetings to hear not just those in opposition of some of the things coming from the school, but from the parents of young children who are afraid and tired of this new kind of fear, which is the fear that their young children or their children's younger siblings will not get to grow up in the same school that they do, and that they'll have to cart them off to Coneswogue or Three Village or Mount Sinai, which will inevitably raise our taxes because of our extremely low tax rate in our district."

Sora continued explaining to the association how he has seen finances be directly allocated to programs within the high school.

"The expenditures that some call questionable would have prevented my chorus class from having to rehearse in the back of an auditorium instead of a classroom, from having one of our band teachers lose his classroom to a different section of the auditorium," Sora shared. "And you might have guessed it, but it's hard to practice singing when the only thing separating the singing and the trumpets are a few curtains."

As the conversation unfolded, tensions ran high, and accusations flew back and forth between opposing viewpoints. Some residents expressed frustration at the lack of civility, urging for a more productive and respectful dialogue.

"In the email that went out yesterday, it says, 'Some of our fellow residents will be sharing their concerns regarding the school and its future' — I feel given the weight of what we're discussing, more information would have been helpful to help prepare for this discussion," resident and former Democratic congressional candidate Kyle Hill said. "Even so we complained about all the FOIA issues. It would be nice if we just included those documents as attachments that go out so we can have a better-informed discussion going forward."

Despite the heated exchanges, many residents voiced their commitment to finding common ground and working together to address the challenges facing the school district. Several attendees suggested forming a task force or committee to explore potential solutions and

Continued on A8



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Opinion

Save our schools

BY PHIL GRIFFITH
DESK@TBRNEWSMEDIA.COM

Some residents advocate defunding and closing the Port Jefferson School District. They promise an illusionary tax reduction. I believe the schools and students are our village's greatest assets. Since the first school opened in 1820, Port Jefferson residents have enthusiastically supported educating our children. It's time to rebuke those who would abandon that tradition.

The human cost of closing the schools would be devastating. Students would be transferred to presently unknown school districts. All employees would lose their jobs, salaries, contractual rights and benefits. Local control by our elected school board would be lost. Residents will not be permitted to vote on school budgets or elect board of education members. Parents and students lose proximity to schools. Businesses will discover lower takings because students, parents and special events attendees will shop elsewhere. We'll no longer be able to brag about the super schools in our village. No longer will prospective home buyers choose Port Jefferson because of the prestigious reputation of our education system. How will that affect home prices?

Is our Port Jefferson School District superior? Class size is 10 students to one teacher, one of the smallest anywhere. Our special education program is one of the finest. According to U.S. News & World Report, Earl L. Vandermeulen High School ranks No. 99 within New York state and No. 903 out of 17,680 United States schools. Of the 72 school districts in Suffolk County, Port Jefferson ranks No. 7. The music program is nationally recognized. Special classes like Latin are offered. Due to the low number of students, participation in varsity sports is high. Students are 100% immunized — 48% female, 52% male — and come from Belle Terre and Port Jefferson villages.

Niche.com ranks Port Jefferson School District No. 44 of 687 as best places to teach and No. 71 out of 681 as best teachers in New York. Of teachers in Port Jefferson district, 100% are professionally certified and have at least three years' experience. The high school was awarded a United States Blue Ribbon medal for excellence in 2017. The district has a 0% dropout rate and a 98% graduation rate in four years. Do we want to abandon such an excellent academic institution?

After the school district is gone, how will



Photo by Elana Glowatz

real estate values be affected? There is a direct correlation between the school budget, higher income, better schools and real estate prices. The National Association of Realtors found 26% of homebuyers consider the quality of the schools to be very important. A good school system raises the value of all homes. According to NewHomeSource, house prices in a top-rated school district are 49% higher than the national median average. A Brookings Institution study demonstrated homes in prestigious school districts are \$205,000 more valuable than in low-performing ones. The National Bureau of Economic Research found every \$1 of school spending returned \$20 on home value. The New York Times cited that every increase of five points on standardized test scores raises home prices by 2.5%.

What happens to the 204 years of schools in Port Jefferson? Formal education in Port Jefferson began in 1820 when James Monroe was U.S. president. There are traditions unique to the Port Jefferson School District. In 1926, The Purple Parrot newspaper was begun and followed by "Crystal" yearbook in 1927. The daisy chain and Halloween parade continue. We gather in Harborfront Park for eighth grade dance and junior prom pictures and frivolity. The senior prom is preceded by a red-carpet entrance into the community-decorated high school. Our Wall of Fame honors alums. The elementary school pool provides life-saving lessons. We welcome back our former students with a homecoming parade down Main Street, football game and class year anniversary dinner. Who will wear the purple and white school colors in the Royals tradition? Where will all of the championship trophies, plaques and banners go?

Will the accepting school district(s) match the Port Jefferson schools excellent academics, special education, select courses, athletic participation, neighborhood proximity, traditions, close social relationships and unique quality? Let us unite students, parents, teachers, administrators, school board members, civil service employees and residents to "Save Our Schools."

*Sign-up bonus payments will be made after the first successful billing cycle.

LEGALS

NOTICE OF ANNUAL ELECTION AND BUDGET VOTE OF THE COMSEWOGUE PUBLIC LIBRARY TOWN OF BROOKHAVEN, COUNTY OF SUFFOLK, NEW YORK

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that the Annual Election and Budget Vote of the qualified voters of the Comsewogue Union Free School District, Town of Brookhaven, Suffolk County, New York, will be held at the Comsewogue Public Library, 170 Terryville Road, Port Jefferson Station, New York, on April 2, 2024, between the hours of 9:30 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. prevailing time, for the purpose of voting, by paper ballot, upon the following items:

(1) Proposition to adopt the Annual Budget for the support and maintenance of the Comsewogue Public Library for the 2024-2025 fiscal year and to authorize the requisite portion thereof to be raised by taxation on the taxable property of the Brookhaven-Comsewogue Union Free School District; and

(2) Election of one (1) Trustee to the Board of Trustees of the Comsewogue Public Library to fill a five-year term commencing July 1, 2024 and ending June 30, 2029, as a result of the expiration of the term of office presently held by John Rossini; and

FURTHER NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that a copy of the statement of the amount of money which will be required for the ensuing fiscal year for the Comsewogue Public Library's purposes, may be obtained by any resident of the School District during the fourteen (14) days immediately preceding and on the day of said vote/election, except Saturdays, Sundays or holidays, from the Library, located at 170 Terryville Road, Port Jefferson Station, New York, during the hours in which the Library is regularly open for business and online at www.cplib.org; and

FURTHER NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that the Comsewogue Public Library

will conduct a Budget Information Hearing for the purpose of presenting the proposed budget of the Library on March 20, 2024 at the Comsewogue Public Library, 170 Terryville Road, Port Jefferson Station, New York 11776 at 6:00 p.m.; and

FURTHER NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that petitions nominating candidates for the Office of Trustee of the Comsewogue Public Library shall be filed in the Office of the Clerk of the Library, 170 Terryville Road, Port Jefferson Station, New York, between the hours of 9:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., prevailing time, Monday through Friday, but not later than 5:00 p.m., Monday, March 4, 2024. Each petition must be directed to the Office of the Clerk of the Library, must be signed by at least twenty-five (25) qualified voters of the District and must state the residence of each signer and the name and residence of the candidate; and

FURTHER NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that personal registration of voters is required either pursuant to section 2014 of the Education Law or pursuant to Article 5 of the Election Law. If a voter has heretofore registered pursuant to section 2014 of the Education Law and has voted at any annual or special district meeting within the four (4) years preceding April 2, 2024, such voter is eligible to vote at this vote/election; if the voter is registered and eligible to vote pursuant to Article 5 of the Election Law, such voter is also eligible to vote at this vote/election. All other persons who wish to vote must register. Registration may be effected during normal school hours when school is in session at the Office of the District Clerk, Administrative Office, Comsewogue Union Free School District, 290 Norwood Avenue, Port Jefferson Station, NY. Those wishing to register may mail completed registration forms to the Suffolk County Board of Elections (forms available to be downloaded at its website; or may be obtained at a U.S. Post Office; or by way

of visiting <https://www.dmv.ny.gov/more-info/electronic-voter-registration-application> in order to do so online); and

FURTHER NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that pursuant to the provisions of 2018 of the Education Law, voting will be permitted by way of early voter and absentee balloting. Except for those persons whose registration record has been marked permanently disabled by the Board of Elections, pursuant to the provisions of the Election Law, applications for early voter and absentee ballots must be received by the Office of the Clerk of the Comsewogue Public Library seven (7) days prior to the vote/election if the ballot is to be mailed to the voter or by 5:00 p.m. on the day prior to the vote/election if the ballot is to be personally delivered to the voter. No early voter or absentee voter's ballot shall be canvassed, unless it shall have been received in the Office of the Clerk of the Comsewogue Public Library no later than 5:00 p.m. on the day of the vote/election. A list of all persons to whom early and absentee ballots shall have been issued will be available in the said Office of the Clerk of the Comsewogue Public Library on each of the five (5) days prior to April 2, 2024 except Saturdays, Sundays and holidays, (subject to the Library being open to the public during such days); and

FURTHER NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that military voters who are qualified voters of the Comsewogue Union Free School District may request an application for a military ballot from the Library Election Clerk by mail to Comsewogue Public Library, 170 Terryville Road, Port Jefferson Station, NY 11776, by email to cspena@cplib.org or by fax to 631-928-6307. In such request, the military voter should indicate his/her preference for receiving the application by mail, fax or email. A military voter must return the original military ballot application by mail to the Office of the Clerk at Comsewogue Public Library, 170 Terryville Road, Port

Jefferson Station, NY 11776. In order for a military voter to be issued a military ballot, a valid military ballot application must be received in the Office of the Clerk no later than 5:00 p.m. on March 8, 2024. Military ballot applications received in accordance with the foregoing will be processed in the same manner as a non-military ballot application under Section 2018-b of the Education Law. The application for a military ballot should include the military voter's preference for receipt of the military ballot by mail, fax, or email; and

FURTHER NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a military voter's original military ballot must be returned by mail to the Office of the Clerk, 170 Terryville Road, Port Jefferson Station, N.Y. Military ballots shall be canvassed if they are received by the Library Election Clerk: (1) before the close of the polls on election day and showing a cancellation mark of the U.S. postal service or a foreign country's postal service, or showing a dated endorsement of receipt by another agency of the U.S. government; or (2) not later than 5:00 p.m. on election day and signed and dated by the military voter and one witness thereto, with a date which is ascertained to be not later than the day before the election; and

FURTHER NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that a qualified voter whose ability to appear personally at the polling place is substantially impaired by reason of permanent illness or physical disability and whose registration record has been marked "permanently disabled" by the Board of Elections pursuant to the provisions of the Election Law shall be entitled to receive an absentee ballot pursuant to the provisions of the Election Law without making separate application for such absentee ballot.

Dated: Port Jefferson Station, NY February 15, 2024

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE COMSEWOGUE PUBLIC

LIBRARY

CHRISTOPHER McCRARY, PRESIDENT

191460 2/15 4x ptr

AVISO DE ELECCIÓN ANUAL Y VOTO DE PRESUPUESTO DE COMSEWOGUE PUBLIC LIBRARY CIUDAD DE BROOKHAVEN, CONDADO DE SUFFOLK, NEW YORK

POR LA PRESENTE SE AVISA de que se llevará a cabo la reunión anual de elección y voto del presupuesto para los votantes calificados del Distrito Escolar Sin Sindicato de Comsewogue, ciudad de Brookhaven, condado de Suffolk, New York, en la Comsewogue Public Library, 170 Terryville Road, Port Jefferson Station, New York, el 2 de abril de 2024 entre las 9:30 am y las 9:00 pm, hora local, con el propósito de votar en papeleta de votación sobre los siguientes puntos:

(1) Adoptar el Presupuesto Anual con el propósito de apoyar y mantener al Comsewogue Public Library para el año fiscal 2024-2025 y autorizar que la porción requerida del mismo se aumente mediante impuestos sobre la propiedad sujeta a impuestos en el Distrito Escolar Sin Sindicato de Brookhaven-Comsewogue; y

(2) Elegir un (1) miembro de la junta directiva de Comsewogue Public Library para llenar una plaza de cinco años que comienza el 1 de julio de 2024 y finaliza el 30 de junio de 2029, como resultado de la expiración del término de oficina que actualmente ocupa John Rossini; y

POR LA PRESENTE TAMBIÉN SE AVISA, de que cualquier residente del Distrito Escolar puede obtener una copia de una declaración de la cantidad de dinero que se requerirá para el año siguiente para los fines de la Comsewogue Public Library durante los catorce (14) días inmediatamente antes de dicha voto/elección excepto los sábados, domingos y

días feriados en la Biblioteca ubicada en 170 Terryville Road, Port Jefferson Station, New York, durante las horas regulares cuando la biblioteca está abierta y en línea en www.cplib.org; y

POR LA PRESENTE TAMBIÉN SE AVISA, que de Comsewogue Public Library llevará a cabo una Audiencia de Información del Presupuesto con el fin de presentar el presupuesto propuesto de la biblioteca el 20 de marzo de 2024 en la Comsewogue Public Library, 170 Terryville Road, Port Jefferson Station, New York 11776 a las 6:00 pm; y

POR LA PRESENTE TAMBIÉN SE AVISA, de que las solicitudes para postular candidatos para la oficina de Miembro de la Junta de Comsewogue Public Library se deben presentar en la oficina del Secretario de la Biblioteca en 170 Terryville Road, Port Jefferson Station, New York, entre las 9:30 am and 4:00 pm, hora local de lunes al viernes, pero a más tardar a las 5:00 pm del lunes 4 de marzo de 2024. Cada solicitud debe ser dirigida a la Oficina del Secretario de la Biblioteca y debe estar firmada por al menos veinticinco (25) votantes calificados del Distrito, y debe indicar la residencia de cada signatario y el nombre y residencia del candidato; y

POR LA PRESENTE TAMBIÉN SE AVISA, que la inscripción personal de los votantes es un requisito de acuerdo a § 2014 de la Ley de Educación o según el artículo 5 de la ley Electoral. Si un votante se ha inscrito según § 2014 de la Ley de Educación y ha votado en alguna reunión anual o especial del distrito en los últimos cuatro (4) años anterior de abril 2, 2024, dicho votante es elegible para votar en esta voto/elección; si un votante está inscrito y es elegible para votar de acuerdo con el artículo 5 de la Ley Electoral, dicho votante es también elegible para votar en esta voto/elección. Todas las demás personas que deseen votar deben inscribirse. La inscripción

Farmingville woman indicted for allegedly stealing \$440K from parents

Used money to gamble at Jake’s 58 Casino in Islandia

Suffolk County District Attorney Raymond A. Tierney today announced on March 13 the indictment of Elizabeth M. Motti, 55, of Farmingville, for allegedly stealing approximately \$440,000 from her vulnerable elderly parents over a one-and-a-half-year period that she used to gamble at Jake’s 58 Casino in Islandia.

“Our elder community is at increased risk for fraud and theft,” said District Attorney Tierney. “We want to place those who choose to exploit our vulnerable populations on notice that if you are caught, you will be held accountable.”

According to the investigation, between April 2017 and November 2018, Motti allegedly stole a total of \$440,063 from her parents’ bank accounts by using debit cards to make withdrawals in the amount of \$355,046 at ATM machines located at Jake’s 58 Casino and by making cash withdrawals from their accounts in the amount of \$85,017. Motti’s parents had moved in with her after her mother had surgery so Motti could be her caretaker.

On March 13, 2024, Motti was arraigned on the indictment before Supreme Court Justice Richard Ambro, for Grand Larceny in the Second Degree, a Class C felony.

Justice Ambro ordered Motti to be released on her own recognizance.

Under current New York State law, the offense for which Motti was indicted is considered non-bail eligible meaning prosecutors cannot ask for bail. Motti is being represented by the Legal Aid Society of Suffolk County. Her next court date is April 18, 2024.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Donna M. Planty of the Financial Crimes Bureau, and the investigation was conducted by Detective Anthony Mezzapelle from the Suffolk County Police Department currently assigned to the Financial Crimes Bureau of the Suffolk County District Attorney’s Office.

—SUFFOLK COUNTY D.A.’S OFFICE

POLICE BLOTTER

The following incidents have been reported by Suffolk County Police:

Arrests made for selling nicotine to minors

Suffolk County Police arrested two people on March 10 for allegedly selling nicotine products to minors during compliance checks at businesses in the Sixth Precinct. In response to numerous community complaints, Suffolk County Police Sixth Precinct Crime Section officers conducted an investigation into the sale of E-Liquid Nicotine products to minors during which four businesses were checked for compliance with the law.

During the investigation, two businesses were found to be selling E-Liquid Nicotine products to minors. The following people were charged with alleged Unlawfully Dealing with a Child: Maheshkumar Baldevbhai Patel, 47, of Ronkonkoma, employed at Mount Sinai Smoke Shop, located at 160 Route 25A, Mt. Sinai; and Yasir Cicek, 25, of Woodside, employed at Puff Club Smoke, located at 1879 Route 112 Unit 6, Coram.

Ronkonkoma woman killed in car crash

New York State Police are investigating a single-vehicle crash that killed a Ronkonkoma woman on the Southern State Parkway on March 4. Stephanie T. Malone, 28, was operating a 2013 Nissan Altima on the eastbound Southern State Parkway near exit 40S in Islip when the accident occurred. No other injuries were reported. It was not immediately clear how many vehicles were involved in the crash. The investigation is ongoing.

New York State Police are asking for any witnesses or anyone with information to call 631-756-3300.

Driver killed in fiery crash in Smithtown

Suffolk County Police Fourth Squad Detectives are investigating a single-vehicle crash that killed a man in Smithtown on March 10. A man was driving a 2006 Honda Civic westbound on East Main Street when he lost control of the vehicle, which overturned and caught fire, in front of 280 East Main St. at approximately 3:45 a.m.

The driver was pronounced dead at the scene by a physician assistant from the Office of the Suffolk County Medical Examiner. An autopsy will be performed to confirm the driver’s identity. The Honda was impounded for a safety check.

Anyone with information on this crash is asked to contact the Fourth Squad at 631-854-8451.

CAUGHT ON CAMERA



Do you recognize this man? Photo from SCPD

Wanted for petit larceny

Suffolk County Crime Stoppers and Suffolk County Police Sixth Precinct Crime Section officers are seeking the public’s help to identify and locate the man pictured above who allegedly stole medication and personal products from Target, located at 2975 Horseblock Road in Medford, along with a female accomplice, at 1:56 p.m. on Feb. 11.



Do you recognize this man? Photo from SCPD

Wanted for petit larceny

Suffolk County Crime Stoppers and Suffolk County Police Fourth Precinct Crime Section officers are seeking the public’s help to identify and locate the man who allegedly stole sneakers from Dicks Sporting Goods, located at the Smith Haven Mall in Lake Grove, on March 1 at 4:50 p.m.

— COMPILED BY HEIDI SUTTON

Suffolk County Crime Stoppers offers a **cash reward** for information that leads to an arrest. Anyone with information about these incidents can contact Suffolk County Crime Stoppers to submit an anonymous tip by calling 1-800-220-TIPS.

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Thomas Pappas, MD, Director of St. Francis Heart Center's Cardiac Catheterization Lab, is now right here at Catholic Health Ambulatory Care at Riverhead.

You only get one heart, and St. Francis Heart Center is the best place to care for it. Now, all our pioneering technology and experience, every award and accolade, and every ounce of our internationally-recognized reputation can be found here in Riverhead under the leadership of Dr. Pappas. So, if you need cardiovascular care, you're lucky to live on Long Island, and in Riverhead – because Greater Lives Here, too.



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(516) 412-6672



SBU couple scores \$1.2M to study ways to provide anti-pathogen coating

BY DANIEL DUNAIEF
DESK@TBRNEWSMEDIA.COM

Hoping to take a page out of nature's playbook, a married couple in the Department of Materials Science and Chemical Engineering is studying a structure that could prevent the spread of pathogens on the surface.

Before the pandemic started, Research Professor Maya Endoh and Associate Professor Tadanori Koga were exploring how anti microbial coatings controlled pathogens on the molecular scale.

With the pandemic, they became more focused on ways to prevent pathogens from causing infections after people came into contact with contaminated surfaces.

Working with researchers from Oak Ridge National Laboratory, North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University and the University of Tennessee Health Science Center, the team received \$12 million over three years as a part of the Department of Energy's Biopreparedness Research Virtual Experiment initiative, which supports multidisciplinary research efforts designed to strengthen precautionary measures against infectious disease outbreaks. Koga and Endoh received a subcontract of \$1.2 million from the Oak Ridge National Laboratory which runs until December 2026.

This kind of study, along with other funded research on the spread of pathogens, could be "important to prevent the next pandemic," said Endoh. She added that this kind of work could not only help reduce the danger from another potential pandemic, but could also help cut down infections from other common health threats.

The research plans to explore the physical and chemical interactions that occur when bacteria come in contact with a material surface.

To develop surface coatings that might resist the spread of disease-carrying pathogens, Koga and Endoh are turning to an insect that will be even more abundant than usual this year. For the first time since 1803, the 13-year and 17-year cicadas will emerge at the same time.

Koga and Endoh, however, are less focused on their prevalence or their loud noises than they are on their wings, which resist bacteria and may also provide protection against viruses and fungi, as something about their nanostructure disables these pathogens.

"We want to learn from nature," said Endoh. "As material scientists, we want to mimic this structure."

Their method of killing bacteria is to facilitate bacterial attachment to nanopattern surfaces. They are targeting surfaces that are constantly and directly exposed to pathogens,



Maya Endoh and Tadanori Koga. Photos courtesy Stony Brook University

such as medical devices, tools and sensors.

Their computational results suggest that a nanopatterned surface can puncture a bacterial outer membrane. These scientists can not specify the time range clearly, which is something they are pursuing with the awarded project.

"We are targeting the surfaces which are constantly and directly exposed to pathogens, such as medical devices, tools and sensors," Koga and Endoh explained in an email.

Structural defense

The structure of the cicada wings have nanopillars that are about 100 nanometers tall and that are separated by about 100 nanometers from each other. The nanopillars they plan to use have a height of 10 nanometers, a diameter of 50 nanometers and a space between adjacent cylinders of 70 nanometers.

By creating a similar structure with polymers, the Stony Brook scientists will attempt to manufacture materials that provide the same resistance.

They will optimize the geometric parameters of the nanostructure, especially its height and interpillar spacing, to create different nano topographies, including nanopillars, nanowalls, nanospikes and nanodomes.

They are starting their work with the bacteria E. coli and will use computational approaches to optimize surface geometric parameters, bacteria-substrate interactions and bacterial wall stiffness to create a robust structure-guided antimicrobial surface.

They will use polystyrene block polymers and are planning to use different ingredients such as biopolymers. They believe the



ingredients can be varied.

According to their recent molecular dynamics simulations mimicking experimental conditions, attractive interactions promote additional membrane attachment, pulling the membrane taut against the pillars and creating tension that ruptures the cell wall. The rupture occurs at the high curvature regions near the edge of the pillars.

Surfaces coated by polymers would likely require periodic coating applications. The scientists treat those polymers with a three-dimensional link to improve the mechanical property. They also apply atomic-thin scale metal layers to make the surface more durable.

In collaboration with Brookhaven National Laboratory, they are trying to determine how to make this kind of pattern with different substances.

PJ civic meeting

Continued from A3

gather input from various stakeholders.

"I just have to say that I think it's great that this whole room full of folks took the time to come out tonight and express these different opinions. This is obviously something that's been bubbling up in our community about what we need to do about this and the facts that we need to know about it," Deputy Mayor Rebecca Kassay said.

"As someone who was inspired to run for local office, I wanted to share that the petition filing case for running for the school board here is on April 22 — that election will be May 21," Kassay explained.

"We don't know what shape is the best [for various pathogens], what size is the best and what spacing is the best," said Koga.

Benefits of collaboration

Koga and Endoh appreciate the opportunity to collaborate with a range of talented scientists at other institutions.

"Luckily, we have a lot of collaborators," Endoh said.

Koga and Endoh became a part of a bigger collaboration when they worked with Jan-Michael Carrillo and Bobby Sumpter at Oak Ridge National Laboratory, who started this project.

"This is a nice step, but it's not the end," said Koga. The next step is to "create a real material."

Lifelong collaboration

Koga and Endoh met in their native Japan. Koga is from Kyushu, while Endoh grew up in Sendai, which was the epicenter of the Tōhoku earthquake in 2011, which created the tsunami at the Fukushima nuclear power plant.

They came to the United States when Koga wanted to become a postdoctoral researcher for a two year assignment at Stony Brook. Over 27 years, and four children later, they are still at Stony Brook.

Over the years, Endoh juggled motherhood and a postponed PhD, which she eventually received from Kyoto University.

Koga enjoys watching Japanese players in Major League Baseball and is a fan of Dodgers superstar Shohei Ohtani. A "soccer mom," Endoh enjoys cooking and playing the violin. The couple hikes in the summer and skis in the winter.


As for their own protective measures during the pandemic, Koga and Endoh regularly washed their hands, although they didn't use Purell or other special wipes to clean any surfaces.

"So, if there's anyone who's motivated, and I know that we all have different jobs, different life responsibilities, so this is not for everyone, should anyone feel that they are so compelled to run for the school board, that option is there too."

As the meeting concluded, residents left with a sense of urgency and determination to continue the conversation and explore viable options for the school district's future.

The debate surrounding the fate of the district remains ongoing, highlighting the complexities and passionate viewpoints within the community regarding education and community development.


The next Port Jefferson Civic Association meeting will be held April 8.



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POR LA PRESENTE SE DA UN AVISO ADICIONAL de

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Fechado:
Port Jefferson Station, NY
15 de febrero de 2024

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CHRISTOPHER McCRARY,
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PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that pursuant to Section 20(5) of the Municipal Home Rule Law, a public hearing will be held by the Village Board of Trustees of the Village of Port Jefferson on the 27th day of March 2024, at 6:00 p.m. at Village Hall located at 121 West Broadway, Port Jefferson, New York 11777, to consider enacting the following proposed Introductory Local Law:

INTRODUCTORY LOCAL LAW
OF 2024
CREATING PART I (ADMINISTRATIVE LEGISLATION), CHAPTER 7 (BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE) OF THE CODE OF THE VILLAGE OF PORT JEFFERSON

SUMMARY
The proposed Local Law would create Part I (Administrative Legislation), Chapter 7 (Budget and Finance Committee) of the Code of The Village of Port Jefferson.

This is a summary of the proposed Local Law, a full copy of which is on file in the Village Clerk's Office and is available for inspection during regular Village business hours.

At said public hearing, any persons interested shall be given the opportunity to be heard.

By order of the Board of Trustees of the Village of Port Jefferson.

Dated: March 1, 2024
VILLAGE CLERK
SYLVIA PIRILLO, RMC
Port Jefferson, New York

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SCHOOL DISTRICT
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Town of Brookhaven
State of New York

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

The Board of Education of Brookhaven-Comsewogue Union Free School District, Port Jefferson Station, Town of Brookhaven, County of Suffolk, New York, hereby invites the submission of proposals in a sealed envelope for the following:

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Proposals will be received until Wednesday, May 1, 2024 at 1:00 P.M. in the District Administration Office at 290 Norwood Avenue, Port Jefferson Station, New York, at which time and place all proposals will be publicly opened, but will not be read aloud. Any interested party may attend. There will be no discussion at the time of the opening of the proposals. The names of the proposing firms shall be available following the proposal opening.

Proposal packets may be obtained at the same office by calling the Pupil Personnel Office at (631) 474-8127. The Board of Education reserves the right to waive any informalities in the proposals, or to reject any or all proposals or to accept any proposals, which in the opinion of the Board of Education, will be in the best interest of the school district.

Board of Education
Brookhaven-Comsewogue Union Free School District
290 Norwood Avenue
Town of Brookhaven

Suffolk County, New York

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PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that pursuant to Section 20(5) of the Municipal Home Rule Law, a public hearing will be held by the Village Board of Trustees of the Village of Port Jefferson on the 10th day of April 2024, at 6:00 p.m. at Village Hall located at 121 West Broadway, Port Jefferson, New York 11777, regarding the Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Tentative Annual Budget.

The Tentative Annual Budget will be on file in the Village Clerk's Office on or before March 20, 2024, will be available for inspection during regular Village business hours, and will be posted on the official Village of Port Jefferson website: portjeff.com.

The proposed annual salaries included in the 2024/2025 Tentative Annual Budget for the Village of Port Jefferson Board of Trustees are as follows:

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At said public hearing, any persons interested shall be given the opportunity to be heard.

By order of the Board of Trustees of the Village of Port Jefferson.

Dated: March 7, 2024
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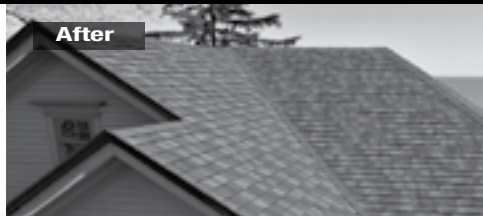
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Editorial

Importance of civic associations and resident-run conversations

In the heart of every thriving community lies a network of voices, opinions and ideas that form the very essence of its identity. These voices, when united through platforms such as civic associations and other civic groups, become a powerful force for positive change and progress. As we navigate the complexities of modern life, it is essential to recognize and emphasize the invaluable role that community forums play in representing the unified voice of residents.

Civic associations and similar groups serve as the lifeblood of local democracy, providing a platform where residents can come together to discuss issues that matter most to them. These forums offer a space for open dialogue, collaboration and problem-solving, allowing community members to actively engage in shaping the future of their neighborhoods and cities.

One of the primary benefits of community forums is their ability to amplify the collective voice of residents. In a world where individual voices can often feel drowned out by larger forces, these forums empower individuals to come together and advocate for common goals and interests.

It is necessary for these groups to facilitate ongoing and productive dialogue rather than drown one another out with differences of opinions. The goal of such associations is to gather together and advocate together. Whether it's for improved public services, addressing community concerns or promoting initiatives for positive change, the unified voice of residents carries significant weight in decision-making processes.

Community forums foster a sense of belonging and solidarity among residents. By bringing people together from diverse backgrounds and perspectives, these forums bridge gaps and foster understanding, strengthening the social fabric of our communities. They provide opportunities for residents to connect, build relationships and work toward common objectives, creating a sense of shared ownership and responsibility for the well-being of their community.

Civic groups can serve as a vital link between residents and local government authorities. By acting as a platform for dialogue and collaboration, these forums enable residents to communicate their needs and priorities to decision-makers. This direct engagement not only ensures that the voices of residents are heard but also facilitates more informed and inclusive decision-making processes that reflect the genuine needs and aspirations of the community.

In today's rapidly changing world, the importance of community forums cannot be overstated. As we face various challenges, ranging from urban development and environmental sustainability to affordability and changing public school landscapes, it is crucial to harness the collective wisdom and energy of our communities.

By actively participating in civic associations and other civic groups, residents can contribute to the creation of vibrant, resilient and inclusive communities that reflect their values and aspirations.

Letters to the Editor

In celebration of Long Island

Thank you for your wonderful editorial celebrating Long Island and highlighting the benefits of Long Island's history, culture, institutions and natural beauty ["Uniqueness of where we live," TBR News Media, March 7].

We should all be very proud of being Long Islanders — one of the most beautiful places in the world.

My wife reminds me that since we met 16 years ago, we have traveled to more than 39 countries, but I still love Long Island, NY, USA, the best!

Yes, it's expensive, traffic is bad, mass transit is substandard, taxes are excessive, regulations burdensome, many rules are prudish and Victorian. But Long Island has some of the best beaches, fishing, parks, wildlife and water sports in the world.

Our spring and fall seasons are beautiful and most of our people are diverse, friendly and caring. But most of all we have the NY Islanders, the NY Yankees, the NY Mets, NY Knicks, NY Nets, NY Giants and NY Jets and some of the best sports fans in the universe.

I have been a Smithtown Rotarian for over 40 years and we are dedicated to local and international charities. Long Islanders are extremely generous to Rotary helping our veterans, children, seniors, handicapped and those less fortunate. Celebrate Long Island and let's work to make it the paradise it can be.

*Alan H. Cohn
Nesconset*

Women are not cattle

Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor wrote, "The ability of women to participate equally in the economic and social life of the nation has been facilitated by their ability to control their reproductive lives."

Ironically, anti-choice Assemblyman Ed Flood [R-Port Jefferson] sponsors program CWA332 at our local Comsewogue Public Library titled, "Financial Literacy for

Women," which includes the descriptor, "Learn the basics to make informed financial decisions, regarding goals."

We know how to make informed decisions because we are not cattle. Unfortunately we must constantly organize against anti-choice legislators who consider us as such. How big to grow our families is key to our informed financial decisions, goals, investments and budgets. Is lesson No. 1, "Try not to be born with a uterus"?

*Joan Nickeson
Terryville parent*

Electric buses save money in the long run

Your article on the necessary and state-mandated transition to electric school buses makes a number of valid points, but then pivots to a recitation by state Assemblyman Ed Flood [R-Port Jefferson] of the supposed disadvantages of electric buses [TBR News Media, Feb. 29].

Before echoing the disinformation of the fossil fuel industry perhaps Flood should visit Chile, which has the world's second largest fleet of electric buses after China. Santiago alone has several thousand electric buses used for public transit in a city known for its hills. This is a far tougher job than carrying perhaps 60 students on a limited route on the flat island we live on.

Cost is another phony issue Flood raises. At the moment, the upfront cost to purchase an electric bus is higher than that of a diesel bus — that will come down in a few years as production ramps up. But even now, the electric "fuel" and maintenance required by an electric bus cost far less than those of their diesel counterparts.

And we are all paying the hidden health and medical cost of the asthma and other respiratory ailments caused or worsened by the toxic diesel bus fumes breathed by our children who ride those buses every school day.

Those few school districts that own their buses should start by buying some

electric buses as soon as possible to gain experience with them. Gov. Hochul's [D] administration needs to give them the tools they need to navigate the acquisition and installation of charging stations.

The districts that bid out their transportation contracts should modify their bid packages to reduce risk to the companies bidding by offering longer contracts for bus companies that provide an increasing portion of electric buses in their fleet during the contract.

Mass charging of school bus fleets will require upgrades to our electric grid, but these upgrades can be implemented gradually as the number of buses increases over the years. The buses can be charged at night, when off-peak rates are lower. And during the summer, when bus usage is low, their batteries can be used for grid backup and to support electric demand at peak times in the late afternoon, just as PSEGLI uses our home batteries whose cost has been subsidized by government rebates.

Finally, eliminating diesel from New York state's school bus fleet is one of many steps to fulfilling the state's climate law. Investments we make now are going toward a livable future for our kids — on and off the school bus.

*Peter Gollon
Huntington*

On the road again

March 12 was the 102nd anniversary of Northport resident Jack Kerouac. It made me reread one of his best writings, "On The Road." His works reminded me of the more adventurous spirit of youth. Sadly, as we get older, with more responsibilities and less free time, there are fewer journeys to take, but Kerouac's ideals continue to live in all of us.

*Larry Penner
Great Neck*

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Opinion

Peaking through the window into the lives of other families

When we are born, the experience is passive, as we don't suddenly decide, despite what our families might tell us later about how we couldn't wait to see the world, that it's time to leave the womb.

Similarly, once we're outside, we don't make many choices. We can't say, "Milk? Again? You don't have orange juice or maybe a chocolate milkshake?"

The people around us, the customs that define our days and years, the languages we speak and many other factors that shape who we are remain outside our control.

Definitions of normal vary by our circumstances. People who share a single room and one bathroom with four siblings and those with four dogs, three cats, and two parakeets typically accept the conditions around them.

"Everyone has a crazy Uncle Allen and a chatty Aunt Dorothy," they think. Or, perhaps, "everyone shops for a new wardrobe each year before the start of a school year" or "doesn't everyone run three miles before breakfast every morning?"

And then, in the journey through life, we get a window into the lives of other people.

When our daughter was about four years old, she visited a friend, who, our daughter reported, drank soda with breakfast and ate candy as a post breakfast snack. "I like soda," our daughter declared after the playdate. "Why can't I have it with breakfast, too?"

It's not just visits to other homes that become eye-opening experiences: we read about people, watch dramas about their lives, and get a sense of what we think we might strive for or reject in our expanding world.

We and our children see our families in a completely different light when we have the opportunity to compare them to the world outside. Sometimes, we not only measure up, but we exceed the limitations of other people's lives. Our children might, for example, spend

time with parents who pay little to no attention to their sons and daughters, barely aware of their comings and goings.

At that point, our helicopter parenting, which made them gnash their teeth every time we asked for more details about the events of their day, upcoming tests, school dances, or tryouts for school plays, might seem considerably less unbearable or even, dare I say it, charming.

Other times, we fall short in ways that even our children recognize is well outside the experience of most people. Some of their friends' parents might own private jets, have a spare house on the lake, or have season tickets near the front row to watch one of their favorite teams.

Despite the id-driven desire to have similar life amenities, our children, sooner or later, recognize that they shouldn't expect such lavish luxuries, even if they secretly, or, perhaps, not so secretly, hope to attain them.

And then there are the times when the world outside the family seems like the kind of easy-going, light-hearted, jovial tv show in which they'd like to star as the plucky but successful child.

During those moments, we can ask some questions about what they want or wish for that they don't have, or that, perhaps, they find too cumbersome. Yes, we tell them, we really are related to that wacky Uncle Allen, but that doesn't mean our children are going to become like him or that he has no redeeming qualities. Indeed, the search for redeeming qualities in everyone, starting with our own extended family, may help re-inflate our disappointed children.

If the head-to-head match up leaves them wanting something else, we have other options. We can suggest that no one will ever love or appreciate them as much as we do.

We can also suggest that they can use their desire for something more or different to inspire them to work hard for it and to find it for themselves and, if they choose to have one, for their own families.

Hopefully, our children can recognize that, on balance, the things that they considered givens — material, cultural, ethical and otherwise — didn't drop from the sky, but came from hard work and the best of intentions.



D. None of the above

BY DANIEL DUNAIEF

The Ides of March tell a tale of violence, betrayal and murder

This week brings us the Ides of March on the 15th. The designation comes from the Romans, who marked several religious services on that 74th day of the Roman calendar. It was also the deadline for settling debts in Rome. But most notable, it's the day Julius Caesar was assassinated in the Senate by conspirators who may have numbered between 60-80.

Caesar was stabbed 23 times that day, but only one knife thrust was fatal, delivered through his ribs. He probably bled to death, and his body was left unmoved for a long time after the assailants fled. Caesar was 55 years old.

Caesar is not just a remote figure in history for me. In high school, I suffered with him and because of him through his account of the Gallic Wars during my four years of Latin. Reading of military battles in his own words has left me with some sense of him. In addition to being a warrior, he was also a historian, a statesman and an author who thought highly of himself, and not without merit.

History regards Caesar as one of the most brilliant military commanders. He and his legions conquered Gaul, essentially what is France today, among other major victories and reached as far as Britain.

But it was on his return

from those eight years of warfare that he was told by the Senate to disband his army and return to civilian life. Refusing, he crossed the Rubicon (where the phrase indicating an irreversible decision originates) and marched with his soldiers to Rome.

Ruling as dictator from 49 BC, Caesar was declared head of the Roman Republic by the senate for life. It was shortly thereafter, in 44 BC, that those who opposed him were able to gather support for his murder, fearing his permanent stature and absolute power. The scene was carefully staged to happen in the senate so as to appear an act for the public good.

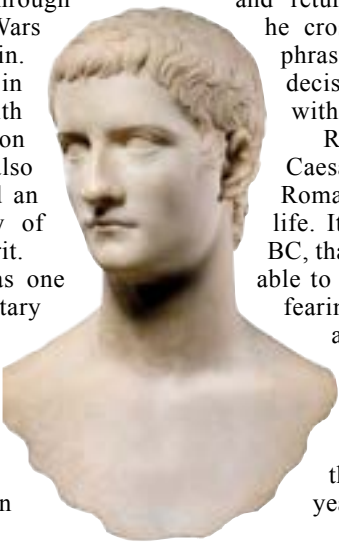
In fact, it was his death that ended the Republic. Four years of civil war ensued until

his adopted son and designated successor, Octavian, was victorious in 40 BC, and on the anniversary of Caesar's death, executed 300 senators and staff to avenge the murder. He came to rule Rome as Emperor Augustus in 27 BC. Thus began the Roman Empire.

Caesar's reforms were allowed to stand, most notably the Julian calendar, land distributions, offering citizenship to many in far off lands, unheard of until then, and a vast building program.

Caesar was warned of a plot to overthrow him, and he was urged by his wife not to go to the senate on March 15. Initially he sent word to its members that he was not coming. But then one of the conspirators went to his home and coaxed him into attending the fateful session.

Unlike Caesar, beware the Ides of March. Or at least, like Shakespeare, commemorate the event by telling one of history's better tales.



Between you and me

BY LEAH S. DUNAIEF



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